

A NEW SPECIES OF URSINIA

By H. M. L. BOLUS and H. HALL

Ursinia geyeri L. Bolus et H. Hall, sp. nov.

Perennis, sat humilis, diffuse parceque ramosa; rami primarii cum aetate lignosi, 15—17 cm. longi, internodiis 5—10 mm. longis, ad 3 mm. diam.; ramuli ultimi floriferi 5—6 cm. longi; partes herbaceae novellae dense cinereo tomentosae, tomento cum aetate $\pm$ caduco; folia ascendentia, e basi amplexante pinnate vel 2-pinnate divisa, vel suprema integra, ad 2 cm. longa, manu complanata ad 1.3 cm. lata, segmentis obtusis, 1—8 mm. longis, ad 1 mm. latis; pedunculi 5 cm. longi; capitula ad 5 cm. diam. vel ultra; squamae involucri ca. 5-seriatae, omnes membranaceo marginatae, ad 8 mm. longae, paleae spathulatae, 6 mm. longae; ligulae emarginatae vel 2—3-denticulatae, laete rubrae, ad 2.5 cm. longae, 4—5 mm. latae; flores disci 6 mm. longi, segmentis atro purpureis, ca. 1.5 mm. longis; achenia 3 visa, clavata subfalcata, 4 mm. longa, squamis pappi 5, basi brunneis, aliter albis, prope apicem ad 5 mm. latis.

Cape Prov.: in dit Ceres; "on the farm Gansfontein, Ceres Karoo," ca. anno 1958, *A. L. Geyer*. N.B.G. 113/61. Fl. Jun.—Aug. 1961.

A dwarf perennial, diffusely branched herb with a fibrous root system and primary branches woody and very brittle with age, up to 17 cm. long, internodes 5—10 mm. long; leaves silvery grey-green when young, suffused with dull red with age and persistent long after becoming dry; ultimate flowering branchlets developing slowly from axils below the primary peduncle, the minute bud of the capitulum already visible in their earliest stage of growth; heads nodding when immature, held erect at maturity by day and nodding at night with the rays contiguous, for about 5 days before they droop and fade, finally, if mature fruits have been formed, becoming erect and fully exposing the 5 broadly white-winged fruits of the disc-flowers ready for wind-dispersal. The heads, 2 inches or more in diameter, with their glowing scarlet rays, expanding in winter sunshine, and almost black-purple disc-flowers are quite outstanding in this genus, where orange and yellow are the prevailing colours. According to Dr. Geyer the plants seen were not plentiful, "usually found under or in low hard-wooded bushes, sending up their new shoots so that the flowers top the shrubs. Now I find that without such support the new shoots lie almost flat on the ground, rather slovenly. They are eagerly nibbled by sheep and goats wherever they can reach them."

From his comments on the plants he is cultivating in Barrydale and from our more limited observations at Kirstenbosch, this species is evidently slow-growing, requires a well-drained soil and limited watering. It has been successfully propagated by cuttings, but these are rather slow in rooting. It is hoped the few fruits being produced will show quicker results, since this very striking additional colour to the genus shows great horticultural promise.